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9 April 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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25X1

9 April 1965

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CONTENTS

25X1

[REDACTED]

2. Vietnam: Reactions to President Johnson's 7 April speech. (Page 5)

25X1

3. Indonesia: General Nasution expects no improvement in US-Indonesian relations. (Page 8)

[REDACTED]

5. Bolivia: Junta faces test of strength in demonstration today. (Page 11)

6. Ecuador-Peru: Ecuador bolstering defenses along Peruvian border. (Page 12)

25X1

25X1

Next 7 Page(s) In Document Exempt

*Vietnam: [There has been no authoritative reaction from Communist countries to President Johnson's 7 April speech.]

[Moscow radio and press promptly reported briefly on the address and Peiping radio carried a lengthy commentary with extensive quotations juxtaposed with highly critical comments. A delayed reaction from Hanoi, broadcast to audiences in South Vietnam, accused the President of hypocrisy and slander. East European response so far has been limited to brief commentaries which outline the principal points of the speech, but place the greatest stress on the President's commitment to South Vietnam and US determination to continue military actions. There is no available commentary from North Korea.]

[Moscow's initial reaction was contained in a short TASS item and a Moscow domestic broadcast. Both items deliberately juxtaposed excerpts from the speech to contrast his appeal for an "early peace" with his warning that the US must be prepared "for a long continued conflict." The TASS item, carried in the 8 April evening edition of Izvestia, carried a contrived distortion of the President's remarks, claiming that he said that air raids are "a necessary part of the surest road to peace."]

[A dispatch broadcast to Moscow's foreign audiences cited the US press for the information that while the President was speaking US aircraft bombed North Vietnam with napalm bombs. The dispatch said this "new warlike action" cannot be reconciled in any way with Washington's statements on the desire for political settlement in Southeast Asia.]

[Moscow has not yet reported directly the President's reference to "unconditional" discussions. Soviet leaders Brezhnev and Mikoyan in public speeches yesterday did not mention the President's speech. An authoritative response from Moscow may be delayed until after Brezhnev and Kosygin return from a visit to Poland.]

9 Apr 65

5

25X1

[Ambassador Dobrynin, when briefed on the speech beforehand by Acting Secretary Ball, said that if the US did not stop military actions while talks are taking place, no change in the US position would be represented.]

Peiping's first public reaction contained a violent rejection of the idea that negotiations on Vietnam might be possible. Unlike Moscow, Peiping in a domestic language commentary took note of the President's reference to "unconditional discussions," terming it a "fraud" and "old stuff with new decorations." The rest of the speech is characterized as "full of bandit logic and lies." According to Western press reports, People's Daily on 9 April said "gangster logic and big lies" were all President Johnson had to offer in his call for unconditional talks on Vietnam.]

[Hanoi's initial comment did not specifically cite the President's call for "unconditional" discussions. Hanoi noted that the President "hypocritically resorted to the peace label" to whitewash the aggressive nature of the US imperialists. Hanoi claimed the President's policy is "to use money to buy peace."]

[Comment from the non-Communist countries of Asia has been generally favorable. Prime Minister Sato of Japan telephoned the American Ambassador to express his "hearty approval," stating that the clear exposition of US aims had resolved his doubts and anxieties. A government spokesman said that Japan was ready to "actively participate" in the proposed economic development program.]

[Philippine Foreign Secretary Mendez said the speech showed "admirable determination." He felt, however, that there should be no negotiations with the Viet Cong since "that would give them a personality they do not deserve."]

[A Seoul radio commentator, in an otherwise factual treatment of the speech, termed the US position a "considerable retreat" in the face of world pressure but one which would improve the American image and "reap a bumper propaganda harvest."]

9 Apr 65

6

[An Australian government statement warmly welcomed the President's proposals and said they did not seem to involve any important change in policy. Labor opposition leader Calwell called the speech a "heartening and refreshing expression of sanity and wisdom." New Zealand's Prime Minister Holyoake termed it "generous and encouraging."]

[South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Do said his government, despite some reservations, does not oppose unconditional discussions and is ready to accept any peace plan so long as the independence of his country is maintained. According to Reuters, several South Vietnamese officials privately expressed concern that the President's proposals might have an adverse effect on morale, but French press reports assert that they were welcomed by "influential circles" in Saigon as a realistic approach.]

[Most African radios carried brief, factual reports of the President's remarks, but there was very little original comment. Radio Cairo highlighted the economic development plan. Accra Radio called the proposals "encouraging" but asserted the US was forced to change its policy because of mounting disapproval of its policies, and because North Vietnamese fighter planes are now resisting the American attacks. Radio Algiers ignored the gist of the President's speech, but used an item from a pro-Communist newspaper which attacked US policy in Vietnam and called for negotiations with the Liberation Front. The most favorable African comment came from President Keita of Mali who called the proposals "a happy evolution of the American position which parallels that of General de Gaulle."]

[Initial reaction in Western Europe is favorable but extremely limited. The British statement welcomed President Johnson's address as a "statesman-like and imaginative approach" offering "a framework within which it would be possible to resolve the present conflict." UK Foreign Office officials reportedly feel that the President's "clarification" of US policy

9 Apr 65

7

25X1

should considerably facilitate London's efforts to find a basis for negotiations and that it might encourage the "peace mission" of former Foreign Secretary Patrick Gordon Walker who plans to leave for Asia about 14 April.]

[French reaction in public media indicated hope that the Vietnam war could now be resolved by negotiation and the government-controlled radio commented that "an important step has been taken to break the deadlock in which the war in Vietnam finds itself." French officials reportedly cited the President's favoring negotiations without prior conditions as echoing Paris' call for a political solution in South Vietnam, but they criticized the President's failure to indicate a willingness to talk to the Viet Cong as hampering the opening of negotiations.]

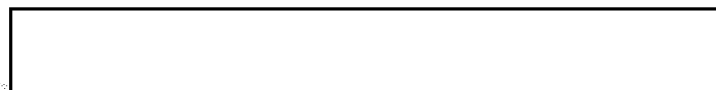
[In Bonn, a spokesman for Chancellor Erhard welcomed President Johnson's resolution to keep US troops in South Vietnam. A Munich paper heralded the President's constructive solutions for the future of all Southeast Asia and pointed out that his firm stand on the US commitment in the area indicates American willingness to oppose aggression "whether on the banks of the Mekong or those of the Spree." Radio Stuttgart asserted that "the President's conditions for a peace settlement constitute probably the first clear offer to leave South Vietnam, secured by an agreement, without the protection of American troops."]

[Several Italian papers cited the favorable impact President Johnson's economic proposals for Southeast Asia will have on the "nonaligned countries" and pointed up the fact that the President's speech has placed the responsibility for a peaceful settlement in South Vietnam with the Communist governments which support the Viet Cong. Belgian Deputy Foreign Minister Fayet noted that President Johnson has shown the clear US desire for a lasting peace in Southeast Asia and observed the the speech "may become a happy turning point."]

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9 Apr 65

7a



25X1

[UN Secretary General U Thant sent President Johnson a personal message welcoming his address as constructive and statesmanlike, and a spokesman for U Thant indicated the Secretary General is giving careful study to the President's economic development proposals.]

[Canadian Foreign Minister Martin said Ottawa was prepared "to play a full role in a Southeast Asia development program and that "it was ready to name a representative to assist U Thant and others to pave the way."]

[Latin American reaction has been sparse. Brazilian political and diplomatic circles reportedly received the President's proposals for a negotiated solution with "great satisfaction," The Lima Radio America Network noted that "the US government has now fundamentally modified its position on the Vietnamese question."]

[Cuban television commentator Luis Gomez Wanguemert said in a 7 April telecast that President Johnson's remarks on the US willingness to negotiate on Vietnam without prior conditions is at least "something positive." He asserted President Johnson was finally responding to the demands of the US people who are anxious to end their country's "dangerous adventure" in Vietnam.]

[The Cuban announcer went on to say that President Johnson did not mention anything which would provide the basis for real peace talks. He alleged the President's statements that the US "will not tire" and "will not withdraw from Vietnam" clearly show that US policy is based on "false facts" and that the truth is that the US is "defeated."]

[Gomez Wanguemert said the \$1 billion "bait" offered by President Johnson "will not interest anyone" in Southeast Asia. Havana's Prensa Latina also depicted the President's offer of economic aid as "hypocrisy."]

25X1

9 Apr 65

7b

25X1

Indonesia: General Nasution, Indonesia's Secretary of Defense, has told visiting US Ambassador Bunker that no improvement in US-Indonesian relations should be expected.]

[Nasution foresees a period of one or two years of "difficulty" arising from the trend of Indonesian internal politics and developments in the Far East.]

[Nasution observed that the anti-US campaign has abated temporarily, but said it can be expected to resume late this month after the anniversary celebrations of the Bandung Conference. He predicted that it will be only a matter of time before the entire US presence in Indonesia, official and private, comes under attack.]

[Nasution advised that American "targets"--programs as well as personnel--be removed from the country, because the US presence provides the Communists with opportunities for exploitation and hurts the anti-Communists. He assured Ambassador Bunker, however, that Sukarno had issued firm orders that US personnel not be harmed.]

[Nasution's statements appear frank and reasonable. He has opposed the pro-Communist trend in the country, and is no longer a member of the inner circle of Indonesian officialdom.]

25X1

25X1

9 Apr 65

8

25X1

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Bolivia: A large-scale demonstration that the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) is planning to hold in La Paz today is intended to test the junta's strength.

The purpose of the rally is ostensibly to celebrate the 13th anniversary of the 1952 revolution, but it is actually aimed at forcing political concessions from junta president Barrientos.

25X1

25X1

Barrientos recognizes the situation as a three-way test of strength in which the junta must act to maintain its authority. A decree prohibiting political demonstrations has been issued and the junta is taking security measures to prevent violations of the order. Some indecisiveness on the part of the junta is evident, however, and Barrientos is said to fear that some junta members are not to be trusted to withhold security information from the MNR and FSB.

MNR leader Hernan Siles is apparently trying to force Barrientos into a political alliance with his party. If the maneuver fails, Siles reportedly is willing to lead the MNR into a pact with pro-Communist Juan Lechin, and thereby create a powerful leftist front openly opposed to the junta.

25X1

25X1

9 Apr 65

11

25X1

Ecuador-Peru: [A build-up of Ecuadorean armed forces near the Peruvian border may increase tension between the two countries and could lead to border clashes.]

25X1

[redacted] Quito is moving troops and equipment to bolster its defenses along the southwestern frontier in accordance with a mobilization plan. Draftees are also being retained past their normal tour of active duty, and new conscripts are being inducted as rapidly as possible. Ecuador has, in addition, requested a large amount of equipment from the US [redacted]

25X1

25X1

[The Ecuadorean build-up is occurring against the backdrop of next month's Extraordinary OAS Conference in Rio De Janeiro, at which Quito intends once again to air its old border grievances with Peru. Relations between the two countries have been generally good lately, but [redacted] the border issue could result in rash actions along the frontier.]

25X6

[Although Peru's forces are far superior to Ecuador's, Ecuadorean officers believe they could wage a guerrilla campaign that would last long enough to bring about a revision of the present boundary agreement through international negotiations.] [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

9 Apr 65

12

25X1

25X1

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